

Questions and Answers Relating to GED/HSED

1. Who is eligible to pursue a High School Equivalency Diploma or a Certificate of General Educational Development in Wisconsin?

A person must be a resident of Wisconsin for voting purposes, or have lived in the state for a least 10 days, or be a migrant worker or the child of a migrant worker in order to be eligible for Wisconsin's High School Equivalency Diploma or a Certificate of General Educational Development.

2. Can a resident of another state or a citizen of another country earn a High School Equivalency Diploma or a Certificate of General Educational Development in Wisconsin?

Yes. If the person satisfies the eligibility requirements listed in question # 1.

3. Can Wisconsin's official test centers administer the GED tests to candidates who are not Wisconsin residents?

Yes. Candidates from other states are eligible to take the GED tests in Wisconsin. They are **not** however eligible for a Wisconsin GED certificate or HSED unless they meet Wisconsin's PI 5.03 Wis. Adm. Code eligibility requirements. Paragraph 1 of Section 5.1 of the "GED Examiners Manual" states that "A jurisdiction is permitted, but not required, to administer the tests to persons not residing in that state, province or territory." Out-of-state examinees are required to complete the same counseling and assessment Wisconsin examinees complete prior to testing. Examinees who are not eligible for a Wisconsin credential can ask that an official transcript of their scores be sent to an official test center in their state of residence. The state of residence could then apply for a credential if the candidate meets all of their state's eligibility requirements.

4. Is there an age requirement for earning a High School Equivalency Diploma or a Certificate of General Educational Development?

Yes. A person must be a least 18 years 6 months of age, or the class with which the person entered grade 9 must have graduated from high school.

5. Is a person currently enrolled in a public or private high school eligible to earn the HSED or GED certificate?

No. A long-standing policy of the GED testing service prohibits this practice. A waiver granted to the state of Wisconsin from GEDTS allows some youth enrolled in high school who meet very specific conditions to be administered the GED tests (see question 6 (3)).

6. What are the exceptions to the requirement that GED or HSED candidates not be enrolled in high school?

- A student who is at least 17 years of age may take the general educational development test if one of the following applies: The student is or has been incarcerated in a correctional institution and has written recommendation of the person responsible for the educational program in the correctional institution. A 17 year old student who successfully completes one or more of the GED tests while incarcerated in a secure correctional facility can complete preparation and testing at a Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) school. Since compulsory school attendance laws still apply to such students, enrollment in the WTCS requires a written, no cost contract between the youth, parent/guardian, the youth's local school board and the WTCS school. This same policy applies to 17 year old contracted students who successfully complete one or more of the GED tests while incarcerated in a county jail. Seventeen year old students who continue pursuing a HSED after incarceration can be administered all five GED tests and receive their diploma without waiting until their class graduates or they reach 18 years 6 months of age, or
- The student is enrolled in a federal job corps center program and has the written recommendation to take the general educational development test from the person

responsible for the educational program in the job corps center. Job corps candidates can also be administered all five GED tests and receive their HSED without waiting until their class graduates or they reach 18 years 6 months of age, or

- The student provides written verification that he or she was excused from regular school attendance under s. 118.15 (1)(c) 2., Stats., and has been continuously enrolled and attending a WTCS or CBO program leading to a high school equivalency diploma under a contracted arrangement. If the school district approves a contract for a student who is at least 17 years of age, he or she may begin taking the GED tests. He or she may not however take the final test sooner than three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which he or she turns 18 years of age or 3 weeks prior to the graduation date of the class in which he or she entered grade nine.

7. Who can explain what I will need to do in order to earn a GED certificate or high school equivalency diploma?

Chapter PI 5 of Wisconsin's administrative code outlines requirements and available options for obtaining a GED certificate or HSED. Qualified staff at official GED testing centers located at the WTCS and DOC or CBO's that offer GED preparation programs will provide candidates information on eligibility, that includes orientation, counseling and assessment, prior to GED testing.

8. Who can provide the required counseling sessions(s)?

The counseling will be provided by one of the following: the professional staff regularly assigned to provide this service at a high school, technical college system, a community-based organization, a college or university; a psychologist licensed by DPI or the Department of Regulation and Licensing; or a school counselor licensed by DPI.

9. What amount of counseling time is needed to fulfill PI 5.03, Wis. Admin. Code, eligibility requirements?

The administrative rule establishes no specific amount of time, though it would be the same for the GED certificate as for the HSED. Professional staff must satisfy their test center's chief examiner that the eligibility requirements and procedures prescribed in PI 5.03 (4)(a) (b) and (c), Wis. Admin. Code, have been completed.

10. What is meant by the phrase "a discussion of options available to the individual"?

The required counseling session should clearly inform candidates of the options available to them, including high school completion. They should be informed of the five (5) options available to earn a HSED and that they can earn the GED certificate. Candidates should also know the difference between the two credentials.

The counselor should stress the requirements, expectations, benefits, and limitations of each option.

11. What are the five (5) options available to earn an HSED and what is the difference between the two credentials?

Option PI 5.05 is based on passing the GED tests and completing additional requirements in citizenship, health, career awareness and employability skills; PI 5.06 is based on attainment of high school credits; PI 5.07 is based on post-secondary credits; PI 5.08 is based on a foreign diploma or degree; PI 5.09 is a competency based program approved by the state superintendent. PI 5.04 is based on passing the GED tests and earning the Certificate of General Educational Development. Candidates who opt for the GED certificate are not required to complete competencies in employability skills, career awareness, citizenship and health. Refer to: Chapter PI 5 Administrative Rule for details of each option.

12. What is meant by "development of a plan for completion" of one of the options discussed?

With the assistance of his or her counselor the candidate will develop a personalized written plan which clearly outlines the activities needed to accomplish a specific, identified goal; career objective; or occupation.

13. Do candidates who are only interested in earning a GED certificate have to go through the counseling session, assessment of reading level, and assessment of career interests and aptitudes?

Yes. These requirements apply to all candidates.

14. Do persons who are only interested in earning a GED certificate have to discuss available options with a counselor? Will a plan for completion of one of the options in the administrative rule be discussed with them?

Yes. These requirements apply to all candidates.

15. The administrative rule requires an assessment of reading levels; how is this accomplished?

There are two ways this can be accomplished. A certified transcript of a reading achievement test administered when the candidate was in school is acceptable. If this is not available the candidate would be required to obtain an assessment of their reading level from a qualified person. Test centers are typically using the TABE tests to fulfill this requirement.

16. How can a HSED candidate satisfy the health competency requirement?

There are three (3) options available to satisfy this requirement. A candidate can complete 0.5 high school credit in health while enrolled in school (7th to 12th grade); successfully complete a health course that has been approved by the DPI; or earn a passing score on the health test administered at a GED test center.

17. How does a HSED candidate satisfy the civic literacy requirement?

There are three (3) options available for candidates to satisfy this requirement. A candidate can successfully complete three credits in social studies; including citizenship, while enrolled in high school; by successfully completing a citizenship course approved by the DPI; or by earning a passing score on the civics test administered at a GED test center.

18. If a candidate fails to earn a passing score on a health or civic literacy test how long must he or she wait before re-testing on a different version of the tests?

There is a 60-day retest-waiting period for both the health and civic literacy tests.

This policy has been established for the following reasons. First, it discourages instructional staff and examinees from using the official tests as a practice test. Second, 60 days allows a reasonably adequate time for candidates who failed to earn a passing score to pursue serious preparation/instruction. Third, there are only three forms of each test. Each time a candidate retests, a different form of the test must be used. If a candidate fails all three forms of one of these tests he or she must successfully complete an approved course or earn the required high school credits.

19. How does a candidate who is participating in a program leading to a HSED meet the requirement to be instructed "in career awareness, including instruction in setting short-term and long-term career goals"?

Professional staff are assigned these duties at an institution that provides instruction leading to a HSED (school or other organization). The purpose of this requirement is to provide candidates an opportunity to identify and/or match career interests and aptitudes with realistic goals and to provide information related to post-secondary education and training, financial aid, career clusters and specific occupations.

20. How does a HSED candidate satisfy the requirement "has attained employability skills, including skills in job seeking, applying for work, retaining a job, and self-development and awareness skills"?

An employability class taught by a qualified professional should be available for candidates who have not completed this requirement during their high school experience. The purpose of this requirement is to satisfy the high school graduation standard and to provide students with job search skills, including completing a job application, writing a cover letter, creating a resume, defining skills and performing in an interview.

21. Is it true that HSED candidates who are 55 years of age or older can be waived from the career awareness and employability skills requirement?

Yes. Candidates who are 55 years of age or older are exempted from this requirement. These candidates must request, in writing, to be excused from completing the requirements for instruction in career awareness, employability skills and related components.

22. Are candidates for a HSED required to be citizens of the United States?

No. But candidates must document that they are able to speak, read, and write in the English language. Candidates must show they have successfully completed an approved course in citizenship or received a passing score on the official civic literacy test, or they must document having satisfied the knowledge requirements in order to apply for U.S citizenship.

23. Will candidates for a HSED pursuant to Section PI 5.06 of Chapter PI 5 (attainment of high school credits) who have completed the 13 high school credits required by the state but have not earned a total of 22 credits, have to take any specific courses to qualify for the HSED?

No. However, candidates should be encouraged to take elective courses in an area related the their career interests and aptitudes.

24. Are high school and/or post-secondary credits earned at schools outside of Wisconsin recognized by the state of Wisconsin?

Yes. Credits awarded by schools in other states can be verified by presenting an official transcript.

25. Can candidates who have earned a GED certificate upgrade to the HSED?

Yes. Candidates who have been awarded a "certificate of general educational development" may complete the additional requirements outlined in section PI 5.05 of chapter PI 5 Wis. Admin. Rule, and obtain the HSED. They are not required to surrender their GED certificate.

26. What are the "passing" scores on the GED battery of tests?

A minimum score of 410 on any single test and an average of at least 450 for all tests.

27. What are the "passing" scores on the health and civic literacy tests?

The minimum passing score for the health test is 55.

The minimum passing score for the civic test is 50.

28. When can contracted students whose birthday falls in June, July or August complete GED testing?

Section PI 5.035(b) 1 & 2 of Chapter PI 5 Wis. Admin. Code allows 17 and 18 year old students in a contracted arrangement to complete GED testing "no sooner than three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the person turns 18 years of age or three weeks prior to the graduation date of the class in which the person entered grade 9". "Semester" is defined as the semester of the contracting high school.

Guidelines established by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) interpret this rule to allow contracted students who turn 18 during the summer months of June, July, or August to complete their GED testing no sooner than **three weeks prior to the end of the semester preceding these**

three summer months. A candidate is eligible under this interpretation only if they have been "continuously enrolled and attending a program under a contracted arrangement between the local high school of residence and a Wisconsin technical college system (WTCS) district or a community based organization (CBO) which leads to a high school equivalency diploma and meets the requirements under s. 118.15(1)(c)2, Wis. Stats."

29. Should contracted students be allowed to complete GED testing early?

No. It is not appropriate to allow students to test early and hold their results for submission later. GEDTS is adamant that candidates not be allowed to complete GED testing prior to the time their high school class graduates. Exceptions to this policy would put our GEDTS waiver in jeopardy! Students who have completed all but the final test should be taking elective coursework.

30. Is it possible for someone who has legally changed their name to obtain an HSED or GED Certificate with their new name?

Yes. Anyone wishing to do this should send a copy of the legal documentation of their name change and their **social security number** with their **signed** request. The address of the GED Administrator is: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841. Their original credential must be returned with their request. The version with the former name will be destroyed and a new credential will be issued.

31. How do GED candidates who have not completed testing obtain records on the tests they have completed?

Candidates must obtain partial records from the official test center that administered the tests.

32. Can a 17 year old student confined to a county jail prepare for, and take the GED/HSED tests?

A student who is in a county jail and at least 17 years of age **may** begin to prepare for, and take, GED/HSED tests. Instruction designed to prepare such students for the tests may be provided by a public school teacher **assigned** to your county jail if/when the local technical college does not have a teacher **assigned** to the same unit of the jail. If a public school teacher is **not assigned** to your county jail, the public school located in that community must still enter into..."a contracted arrangement between the local high school of residence and a TCS district or a community-based organization which leads to a high school equivalency diploma..." before a 17 year old student can officially begin preparation or testing.

Seventeen-year-old students are not allowed to begin a HSED program while in a county jail unless they are severely credit deficient (one or more years behind their peers), have the written recommendation of the person responsible for the educational program in the jail, and written permission to take the test(s) from their parent or legal guardian. In some cases it may be necessary to document that a good faith attempt was made to locate a parent or guardian.

Unless there is an approved test center located in your county jail, it will still be necessary for the public school to contract with an official test center in order to authorize GED/HSED testing. Unless there is such a contract, an examiner in an institution other than a county jail is **not authorized to test a 17 year-old student.**

A seventeen year old who begins testing while incarcerated can be administered all seven GED/HSED exams and receive his or her diploma without waiting until "three weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the person turns 18 years of age or three weeks prior to the graduation date of the class in which the person entered grade 9."

33. What is the policy for 17 year old youth who are released from incarceration prior to completing GED testing?

Seventeen (17) year old students who **successfully complete one or more of the GED exams** while incarcerated in a secure correctional facility can complete preparation and testing at a Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) school. Since compulsory school attendance laws still apply to such students, enrollment in the WTCS requires a written, no cost contract between the youth, parent/guardian, the youth's local school board and the WTCS school. Contracted 17 year old students who **successfully complete one or more of the GED exams** while incarcerated in a **county jail** can also complete preparation and testing at a Wisconsin Technical College (WTCS) school.

Seventeen year old students who continue pursuing a HSED after incarceration can be administered all five GED exams and receive their diploma without waiting until their class graduates or they reach 18 years 6 months age.

34. Are 17 year old graduates of the 22 week National Guard Challenge Academy eligible to prepare for, and take, the HSED/GED tests?

Due to a statewide waiver granted by the state superintendent, seventeen-year-old students **who** successfully complete the 22-week portion of **the** National Guard's Challenge Academy can complete **all** five of the GED exams as soon as they are prepared to do so. The waiver also allows Academy graduates to actually receive their high school equivalency diploma (HSED) as soon as they complete all of the requirements of s. PI 5.05 of Wis. Admin. Code. With minor exceptions, other candidates must wait until they are 18 years 6 months of age or until the class with which they entered grade 9 has graduated from high school.

The Challenge Academy's waiver pertains to students while enrolled in the 22-week on-campus portion of the Challenge Academy and during the 12 month mentoring phase, which follows. Cadets who dropout prior to successful completion of the 22-week on-campus portion or fail to comply with requirements for the mentoring phase are not entitled to the waivers provisions.

Challenge Academy graduates who do not successfully complete all of the exams required for their HSED during the 22-week on-campus portion of the program cannot continue to pursue their HSED unless their school district enters into, and pays for, a 118.15 contract for them. Most school districts will have signed a formal agreement to do this before a youngster is accepted into the program.

35. Are seventeen (17) year old youth eligible to earn the GED Certificate?

No. The HSED is the **only** legitimate goal for a 17-year-old candidate. The "certificate of general educational development" is an option for a candidate who is at least 18 years 6 months of age.

36. Where can candidates who took the GED test while serving in the military obtain transcripts of their test scores?

The phone number of the Military Clearinghouse is (800) 257-9484. If this organization does not have a candidates scores, pages 8-13 of the **1997 GED Examiners Manual** describes how candidates can obtain test scores they earned while in the military. Because of changing regulations and procedures, no single source exists from which all test scores can be obtained.

37. What changes can we expect in the new 2002 Series GED tests?

The 2002 Series GED Tests will most likely incorporate these changes:

- The addition of a new dimension of skills that are required for various settings.
- The addition of a cross-disciplinary test.
- The use of a calculator on the mathematics test.
- The inclusion of alternate formats (constructed response items that can be machine or objectively scored).

38. Can scores on the new GED Tests scheduled for release in January, 2002 be combined with partial scores on previous series of the GED Tests?

No. GEDTS policy is that scores earned on the GED Tests scheduled for release on January 1, 2002, **may not** be combined with partial scores earned on previous series of the GED Tests. GED candidates who initiated testing on the 1988-series tests must successfully complete the battery on or before December 31, 2001, to be eligible for a GED based credential. If a candidate has not successfully completed the battery by the end of 2001, his or her scores will be invalidated and he or she must start again with the 2002 series tests.

39. Are candidates seeking a GED credential required to provide their Social Security number?

As the result of a recent test case, GED or HSED candidates can no longer be required to provide their social security number. Candidates are encouraged to provide their number, but cannot be required to provide it. Remembering the alternate number a candidate selects is the responsibility of the candidate. It will be needed in order to obtain an official transcript. If an alternate number selected by, or assigned to, a candidate matches a number already in the system, he or she may need to select another alternate number before being eligible for a credential.

40. Are accommodations available to candidates with a disability who take the GED Tests? If so, what are they?

The range of accommodations is determined by the needs of candidates with disabilities. Need must be fully documented by a qualified and competent professional. The most common accommodations are listed below:

Extra Time: The time limits are extended under special conditions or when the audiocassette or braille editions are used. Candidates with disabilities often require extra time to answer questions and may become easily fatigued.

Private Room: Testing in a private room is available to those who, because of an illness or disability, need to be away from others. It is also available to those whose specific learning disabilities or psychological condition make testing in a group distracting to them or to other candidates.

Frequent Breaks: Some examinees, because of physical discomfort or because of their inability to concentrate for extended periods of time, require frequent breaks during the test.

Interpreter: A certified interpreter may be used to interpret test instructions and essay topic only—not the multiple-choice test questions—to examinees with hearing impairments.

Scribe: A scribe, sometimes called a secretary, amanuensis, or recorder, is someone who records the answers to multiple-choice questions or the essay as dictated by the examinee. This accommodation is appropriate for those who have difficulty writing as a result of visual or physical impairments or specific learning disabilities.

Calculator: Adults who are legally blind are entitled to use a talking calculator or abacus on the Mathematics Test. Adults with physical and learning disabilities may, under certain conditions, be granted the use of a calculator.

41. What forms are acceptable to request testing accommodations for candidates with disabilities?

Forms included in the blue **1997 Examiners Manual** must be used in order to obtain an accommodation. Ask any official GED Examiner for a copy.